Healthy Matters

Minimize the Spread of Germs

It’s the time of year when almost everyone seems to be suffering from sneezes and sniffles. While you can’t always avoid infectious illnesses, you can take steps to help protect yourself and your loved ones.

One of the most effective ways to stop the spread of germs is to wash your hands well. The point of hand-washing is to flush germs down the drain, not necessarily to kill them; so use a mild soap with warm water and wash thoroughly and vigorously for a couple of minutes. If you’re not sure how long you should wash, sing a verse of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” and then rinse and dry well.

Disinfect hard surfaces regularly. This includes telephones, keypads, remote control devices, door knobs, etc. If you are a “wiper” in the kitchen, then use paper towels with a disinfecting spray or use a fresh sponge each day. Soaking sponges over night in white vinegar or in a bleach solution will keep them clean and germ free. Wash clothing and bags often. Wipe down purses and brief cases as these items tend to come in contact with some really icky surfaces.

If someone in the home has been sick, wash their linens in the hottest water possible. Add bleach to the water if the label allows. That person should also toss his/her toothbrush and get a new one.

Avoid sharing personal items such as drinking cups, toothbrushes, or razors.

To help guard against the flu, get vaccinated.

Coping With Traumatic Events

Whatever its nature, a traumatic event often leaves the survivor feeling dazed and helpless. If you have been a victim of some kind of trauma, it is important to understand that you may feel the emotional affects for a while. You must give yourself time to feel better.

Talking to a friend or family member may make you feel better. It may also be helpful to talk about your situation with a professional counselor who can listen and support you in an objective way.

If a friend or relative has experienced something traumatic, it is important to recognize that recovery from such an event takes time. No one can say how much time an individual might need. Expecting the person to “just get over it” isn’t realistic or helpful. If you are a primary source of support for this person, you may also need occasional respite support so that you can feel okay, too.

As much as possible, follow your normal routine. Try to eat healthful foods in the right amounts and to stay hydrated. Try to stay active. If stress from the event is overwhelming, make sure you ask for help or accept help from those who offer it. Time will ease the pain, but you must hold on and cope while that happens.
After weighing the benefits and risks of the prescription drug Meridia, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pulled the drug from the U.S. market. Prescribed to help with weight loss, the drug has been linked to high blood pressure, an elevated pulse, heart attacks, and strokes.

More than two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese. Historically, those who have struggled with weight issues have been viewed as lazy or lacking in will-power. However, one’s weight and the ability to gain or lose as needed are tied to complex interactions among genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Media images that send unhealthful and unrealistic messages to us coupled by companies eager to sell us the next great miracle breakthrough only contribute to our battle of the bulge.

The only safe way to lose weight is through the mathematical combination of taking in fewer calories while burning more. Ideally, one should lose about 1 to 2 pounds each week in order to keep the weight off. Still, the allure of “fast and easy” is too much for many to resist.

If you are taking Meridia or have taken it recently, contact your health care professional for a physical and blood work to make sure no damage has been done. If you still wish to lose weight, find an activity that you enjoy.

The good news is that Americans are living longer. With that said, more middle-aged and older adults are finding themselves single and in the dating scene again. This can put them at risk unless they practice the same precautions as adolescents and young adults are admonished to take.

Anyone who is sexually active, regardless of age, should be mindful of the consequences of having unprotected sex. Sometimes, however, when a person is newly single again and past childbearing age, the danger of acquiring any kind of infection isn’t on his/her mind. As a result, a growing number of older adults are now faced with these infections.

First and foremost, those who are or may become sexually active should limit the number of partners they have. While a monogamous relationship can’t rule out the possibility of infection (You’re having sex with everyone that person has ever had sex with), it will certainly reduce the possibility.

Before taking that next step in a budding relationship, it’s important for the couple to sit down and discuss in a frank and open manner what their potential risks might be.

Use a latex condom, and use it correctly. Too often, couples wait until the point of no return before reaching for this potentially life-saving appliance. When the mood turns amorous, it’s time to bring out the condom and perhaps incorporate it into foreplay.

Talk to your healthcare provider. If you are sexually active, you may need more frequent screenings for health issues other than just STDs. One key to health is behaving responsibly. By doing so, you may be able to enjoy the relationship for the rest of your life.

Relationships don’t have to be platonic when you’re older, but they do need to be safe.
Eat Yogurt and Support Breast Health!

Eating yogurt is an excellent way to get your recommended daily requirements of dairy products. Low in calories and big in taste, a cup of yogurt is a quick meal or snack during the day.

Two popular yogurt brands, Dannon and Yoplait, are currently donating money to help fund breast cancer research so that more lives can be saved.

Enjoy any brand of Dannon yogurt between now and November 30, and Dannon will donate ten cents for every code entered. Codes are located on the lids of specially marked products and may be redeemed online at www.cupsofhope.com.

Yoplait is also making a ten cent donation for every pink lid from their specially marked products that are submitted by December 31, 2010. Simply rinse eligible Yoplait lids and dry them. Then bag them and mail to:

Save Lids to Save Lives
PO Box 420704
El Paso, TX 88542-0704

After skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in the United States. Men are also susceptible to breast cancer. In recent years, breast cancer survival rates have increased, in part due to greater awareness, earlier detection, new treatments, and a better understanding of the disease.

Talk to your health care professional about your potential risk of developing breast cancer, especially if there is a history of the disease in your family. And enjoy some yogurt. It will do you, and someone else, a world of good.

Coping With Holiday Sadness

Picture this:

Your house is immaculate and tastefully decorated. Festively arranged candles flicker in the dimmed lights and the smell of fragrant spices fill the air. The lilting voices of neatly dressed friends and family fill the air as they happily await the feast that is to come.

That sounds just like something from a Hallmark commercial doesn’t it? Perhaps it isn’t anything like the holidays you usually have, or will have this year. It probably isn’t much like the holidays that many of us have because it isn’t real. It is the made-for-TV version of what life should be like. For some of you, it creates an expectation that neither you nor your loved ones can meet.

One of the most important steps in avoiding feelings of sadness during the holidays is to set realistic expectations. Trying to be “perfect” or thinking that you should be can cause a great deal of stress and discomfort because it is an impossible goal. The point of gathering for a holiday or any other occasion is to enjoy time with the people you love. Focusing on your flaws (real or imagined) or the fact that the pies are not homemade or that the china is old detracts from what’s important.

If there are multiple activities going on, choose the ones that you can reasonably handle. If you must visit certain people or attend certain events that you’d rather avoid, remember that you can control how long you choose to stay.

If your sadness stems more from a feeling of isolation or loneliness, keep in mind that there are always numerous community events during the holidays. If you don’t feel comfortable going to a community dinner as the benefactor of the meal, then go as a volunteer. This is a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

If you try various coping mechanisms and you still feel sad and out of sorts, you might benefit from seeking professional help. Sometimes, the “blues” are not a seasonal thing, but an indication that something more serious is going on. Get the help you may need to put the “Happy” back into the holidays.

Expecting too much of yourself or others only leads to disappointment. Learn to be realistic, to set boundaries, to enjoy the moment, and to recognize when what you’re feeling is more than momentary sadness.
Student Support Services houses a variety of services designed to enhance the performance and well-being of students at Oklahoma City Community College.

- Services to Students with Disabilities, including providing accommodations for documented disabilities, interpreting and captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing students, and assistive technology.
- Professional counseling by a licensed provider.
- Learning support specialist to assist with academic needs such as learning styles, study skills, test-taking, and general health and wellness issues.
- TRIO Grant Programs (Upward Bound and Trio Student Support Services) designed to help first generation college students learn more about college before they arrive and how to be more successful once they are here.

For more information about our services and how to access them, please visit our website at http://www.occc.edu/support/ or call us at 682-7520. We are located on the first floor of the Main Building near SEM Entry 3.

**Sweet Potato Soufflé (serves 10)**

- 4 large sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 1/2 cup dry sherry
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup frozen orange juice from concentrate
- 1 teaspoon each nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon
- 1 pinch salt
- 4 large egg whites
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 oranges cut in thin slices

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large pot, cover the sweet potatoes with water and bring to a boil. Boil until tender.

Drain and peel the potatoes and place in a large mixing bowl. Mash well.

Add the olive oil, milk, sherry, brown sugar, orange juice, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, and salt. Beat well with a mixer.

Spoon mixture into an oiled ovenproof gratin dish.

Bake until the potatoes are hot, about 25 minutes.

While the soufflé is cooking, make the meringue. In a clean bowl, whip egg whites until almost stiff. Gradually add the sugar and continue to beat until soft peaks form.

During the last five minutes of cooking the soufflé, top with the meringue mixture. Return to oven and remove when the meringue is lightly browned. Garnish with the sliced oranges.

Per Serving:

- 95 calories
- 2 grams fat (0 grams saturated)
- 3 grams protein
- 25 milligrams sodium
- 18 grams carbohydrates
- 2 grams fiber

Try this recipe for the holidays and have a lighter, but still tasty, side dish.